



# INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VARIABLES OF JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THEIR ACADEMIC STRESS IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the level of academic stress of intermediate students of Chittoor district due to variations in their gender, community, parents education and parent occupation. Data was collected through the Academic Stress Rating Scale from 651 second year intermediate junior college students of Chittoor district, selected by using simple random sampling technique. The study reveals that male students experience high level of academic stress than female students. Significance difference was also observed in the academic stress of students belongs to different communities. Parental education and parent occupation has also influence the academic stress. Based on the findings of the study, the authors suggested appropriate measures to overcome stress in the students based on the variables selected.

## INTRODUCTION:

Stress, anxiety and depression are modern day epidemics. Every one undergoes at least one of the three as result of pressure, be it academic, financial, social, health and so on. Unfortunately our country is obsessed with the pursuit of the holy grail- marks. It is mistakenly believed that the only path to a successful life is by getting into a top college, which in turn can only happen if the child scores very highly. It is the pressure put on children to excel and score top makes that is the cause of stress. There are many children whose support system does not stress or pressure them over academics and they come out with flying colours. This mindset needs to change, so that our children can enjoy the learning process rather than be intimidated by it. In countries like India, the community background, parental education and parental occupation apart from gender issue play a vital role in stress related aspects in the individual. In school and college education too, these variables play a vital role in creating academic stress in students. The present study is an attempt in this direction to reduce the stress in students.

## Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the significance difference, if any, in the academic stress of intermediate students due to variations in their Gender (Male/Female).
2. To find out the significance difference, if any, in the academic stress of intermediate students due to variations in their Community Background (OC/BC/SC&ST).
3. To find out the significance difference, if any, in the academic stress of intermediate students due to variations in their Parental Education (Illiterate/Literate/Up to SSC/Up to Inter/Up to Graduation).
4. To find out the significance difference, if any, in the academic stress of intermediate students due to variations in their Parent Occupation (Govt.employee/Self employee/agriculture/Labourer).

## Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their gender.
2. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their community background.
3. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their education of the parents.
4. There exists significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their parent occupation.

## Methodology used in the Study:

Survey method is used in the study.

## Tools used in the Study:

For the purpose of the study, the researcher has developed Rating Scale to assess the Academic Stress of Second Year Intermediate Students.

The Academic Stress Rating Scale consists of six dimensions with 98 statements i.e. Physical health and Personal Aspects (AS<sub>1</sub>), College Environment Aspects (AS<sub>2</sub>), Teacher-Student- Peer Related Aspects (AS<sub>3</sub>), Academic Related Issues

(AS<sub>4</sub>), Home and College Interface (AS<sub>5</sub>), and Academic Stress due to Examinations (AS<sub>6</sub>).

The validity of the tool was established by obtaining the opinion and suggestions of psychologists, educational experts, professionals working in stress related aspects. Based on the discussions, some statements were deleted and few statements were re-modified to avoid ambiguity and repetition of items in the rating scale. In view of the procedure adopted for development of the rating scale, it is said that the research tool possesses face validity, content validity and construct validity. A pilot study was carried to find out the reliability of the rating scales developed for the study with 70 second year intermediate students (10% of the total sample) studying in intermediate junior colleges, randomly selected from two colleges from East Godavari district conducted. The reliability value of split of method is 0.89 and whole test reliability is 0.94. The intrinsic validity of academic stress rating scale as a whole is (0.97). The reliability and intrinsic validity of the research tool is very high and hence the tool possesses high reliability.

## Locale and Sample of the Study:

There are 60 government & aided and 163 private colleges intermediate junior colleges were functioning in both rural and urban area in East Godavari district.

In the first stage, the investigator has randomly selected 4 government & aided and 11 private junior colleges (7% of the total colleges) in this district by using simple random sampling technique. There are approximately 4338 second year intermediate students are studying in the selected sample colleges. In the second stage, 15 percent i.e 651 second year intermediate students were taken as the sample of the study from the different groups such as M.PC, M.EC, Bi.PC, C.EC & H.EC, by using stratified random sampling technique.

## Data Collection and Statistical Techniques used in the Study:

The developed tool was administered to the second year intermediate junior college students of Chittoor district. The student's were directed to go through the instructions before rating the statements in the respective tools. The collected data was analyzed by using mean, SD and t/F test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The calculated t-values in the table-1, for the academic stress dimensions- college environment aspects (2.73) and home and college interface (3.97) are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis 'there exist significant difference in the academic stress of students due to variations in their gender' is accepted for the above dimensions. It indicates that male and female students significantly differ in their academic stress caused due to the above dimensions. Further, mean values of male (AS2- 42.49 & AS5- 36.41) and female students (AS2- 36.41 & AS5- 33.27) have indicated that male students are experiencing more academic stress than female students. This may be due to the over expectations of parents on male children than females in securing high grades in examinations, ranks in competitive exams. This study is supported by the findings of Pастey et al.(2006), Radha Kishan (2009), Rao (2008) and Reddy and Siva Giri (2017).

On the other hand, the academic stress caused due to physical health and personal aspects (0.57) teacher- student –peer related aspects (0.98), academic related issues (0.71), stress due to examinations (1.69) and academic stress as a whole (1.67) are not significant at 0.05 level. It means, male and female students are similar in their academic stress due to the above aspects.

**Table 1: Mean and S.D. of Academic Stress Scores of Male and Female students studying Second Year intermediate in the Junior colleges and the calculate t- values.**

Academic Stress Dimensions	Gender				t- values
	Male (N= 342)		Female (N=309 )		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Physical health and Personal Aspects (AS <sub>1</sub> )	36.52	7.131	36.20	6.782	0.57@
College Environment Aspects (AS <sub>2</sub> )	42.49	10.013	40.37	9.808	2.73**
Teacher-Student- Peer Related Aspects (AS <sub>3</sub> )	57.25	13.803	56.16	14.492	0.98@
Academic Related issues (AS <sub>4</sub> )	60.79	12.673	60.05	13.939	0.71@
Home and College interface (AS <sub>5</sub> )	36.41	9.845	33.27	10.298	3.97**
Academic Stress due to Examinations (AS <sub>6</sub> )	39.59	8.480	40.75	9.036	1.68@
Academic Stress as a Whole (ASW)	273.05	46.340	266.80	49.177	1.670@

Note: \*Significant at 0.05 level (> 1.96), \*\*Significant at 0.01 level (> 2.56)

The mean and SD scores of the academic stress dimensions of second year intermediate junior college students belonging to different communities and the calculated F-values are presented in table-2.

**Table 2: Mean and S.D. of the Academic Stress Scores of students belong to different community background and the calculated F- values**

Academic Stress Dimensions	Community background						Calculated F- values
	OC ( N=231 )		BC (N=293)		SC& ST (N=127)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
AS <sub>1</sub>	36.21	7.123	36.45	7.194	36.48	6.131	0.09@
AS <sub>2</sub>	42.85	10.184	40.65	10.025	40.93	9.202	3.43*
AS <sub>3</sub>	56.76	14.569	56.63	14.308	56.90	12.799	0.02@
AS <sub>4</sub>	61.52	13.262	60.19	13.205	59.05	13.451	1.51@
AS <sub>5</sub>	32.99	10.929	35.16	9.749	37.87	8.956	9.83**
AS <sub>6</sub>	40.40	8.887	40.01	8.826	39.96	8.429	0.16@
ASW	270.72	50.010	269.10	48.181	271.18	42.714	0.12@

Note: @ Not significant at 0.05 level, \*\*Significant at 0.01 level

**Table 3: Mean and S.D. of Academic Stress Scores of students with regard to Education of parents and the calculated F- values.**

Dimensions of AS	Education of the Parents										Calculated F- value
	Illiterate (N=134)		Literate (N=182)		Up to SSC (N=149)		Up to Inter (N=97)		Up to Degree (N=89)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
AS <sub>1</sub>	36.34	6.880	35.87	6.796	35.89	7.017	38.75	7.276	35.64	6.592	3.55**
AS <sub>2</sub>	39.77	9.370	41.42	10.029	40.55	10.635	43.78	9.138	43.26	9.879	3.37**
AS <sub>3</sub>	55.97	13.029	55.25	14.003	57.38	13.872	60.22	15.573	56.01	14.403	2.22@
AS <sub>4</sub>	58.61	13.275	59.36	13.388	61.29	13.146	61.92	13.407	62.37	12.913	1.87@
AS <sub>5</sub>	37.41	9.033	34.43	10.821	34.94	9.946	36.66	10.233	30.22	9.196	7.88**
AS <sub>6</sub>	38.07	8.430	39.94	8.384	40.21	8.981	41.88	8.539	41.66	89.347	3.58**
ASW	266.16	44.411	266.27	46.228	270.26	51.096	283.21	47.680	269.17	48.645	2.37@

Note: @ Not significant at 0.05 level, \*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\*Significant at 0.01 level

On the other hand, the F-values for teacher- student- peer related aspects (AS<sub>3</sub>: 2.22) - academic related issues (AS<sub>4</sub>: 1.87) and academic stress dimension as a whole (ASW: 2.37), are not significant at 0.05 level, indicating that the variations in the parental education has not brought significant influence on their academic stress due to the above said dimensions.

The obtained F-values with respect to the dimensions- academic related issues (AS<sub>4</sub>: 4.33) and home and college interface (AS<sub>5</sub>: 6.54) are significant at 0.01

The obtained F-values in table-2 clearly shows that, the academic stress dimensions- college environment aspects (AS<sub>2</sub>: 3.43), home and college interface (AS<sub>5</sub>: 9.83) are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis 'there exist significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate junior college students due to variations in their community' is accepted only for the above said dimensions. The mean values with regard to college environment aspects reveals that students from other communities (42.85) are experiencing more academic stress than SC& ST (40.93) and backward community (40.65) students. Generally, other caste (OC) people feel high social status in society and they have better home environment than other communities and parents are aware of the importance of education and may fix goals to them. This may be the reason that the OC community students experience more academic stress than their counterparts from BC and OC communities. Further, the mean values shows that the students of SC& ST (37.87) are facing more academic stress than their counterparts with BC (35.16) and other communities (32.99) due to home and college interface. The reason may be that the parents of SC & ST possess low level of education and their home environment also in low level compared to OC and BC students leading to non attending their childrens academic needs, causing much stress in SC & ST students than BC students. In the recent years, much sensitization and facilities one can witness in backward communities and educationally they are in a better position than the SC & ST communities. Probably, this may be one of the reasons the BC students demonstrated low level of stress compared to the rest of the students.

On the other hand, the calculated F-values of physical health and personal aspects (AS<sub>1</sub>: 0.09), teacher-student-peer related aspects (AS<sub>3</sub>: 0.02), academic related issues (AS<sub>4</sub>: 1.51), academic stress due to examinations (AS<sub>6</sub>: 0.16) and academic stress as a whole (ASW: 0.12) are not significant at 0.05 level, indicating that the community background of students is not having any significant bearing on their academic stress.

Table-3 illustrates that the variable 'education of the parents' has significant influence on the academic stress caused due to physical health and personal aspects (AS<sub>1</sub>: 3.55), college environmental aspects (AS<sub>2</sub>: 3.37), home and college interface (AS<sub>5</sub>: 7.88), and academic stress due to examinations (AS<sub>6</sub>: 3.58) as their F-values are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the corresponding hypothesis 'there exist significant difference in the academic stress of second year intermediate junior college students due to variations in the education of the parents' is accepted for the above said dimensions only.

The trend of the mean values for AS<sub>2</sub>, AS<sub>5</sub> reveals that the students whose parents' education 'upto degree' are experiencing low academic stress (43.26 and 62.37) compared to the parents with education below degree level. This may be due to educated parents have more awareness about the education opportunities and they can guide their children to reach academic goals. These findings are not supported by the studies of Suresh Prabhu (2015), Vijayalaxmi & Lavanya (2009) and Reddy & Siva Giri (2017). The trend of the mean values for AS<sub>1</sub>, AS<sub>2</sub> and AS<sub>4</sub> reveals that the students whose parents' education 'upto inter' are facing higher levels of stress than their counterparts.

level. Further, college environmental aspects (AS<sub>2</sub>: 2.64) is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the formulated hypothesis 'there exist significant differences in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their parent occupation' is accepted for the above said dimensions only. It means, the variable 'parent occupation' has significantly influenced the stress of students caused due to college environmental aspects, home and college interface and academic related issues only.

**Table 4: Mean and S.D. of Academic Stress Scores of students with regard to parent occupation and the calculated F- values.**

Academic Stress Dimensions	Parent Occupation								Calculated F- values
	Govt. Employee (N=98)		Self Employed (N=169)		Agriculture (N=211)		Labourer (N=173)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
AS <sub>1</sub>	37.45	6.715	35.62	7.367	36.09	7.137	36.83	6.413	1.81@
AS <sub>2</sub>	43.88	8.855	41.24	10.129	41.47	10.331	40.39	9.797	2.64*
AS <sub>3</sub>	57.67	14.495	55.89	14.615	56.82	13.807	56.90	13.923	0.35@
AS <sub>4</sub>	64.79	12.960	59.27	13.033	60.13	12.470	59.50	14.256	4.33**
AS <sub>5</sub>	32.44	9.429	33.24	10.896	35.66	9.936	37.05	9.653	6.54**
AS <sub>6</sub>	42.34	9.036	39.83	8.144	39.91	8.930	39.47	8.859	2.52@
ASW	278.56	46.296	265.09	48.361	270.08	46.780	270.15	48.934	1.65@

Note: @ Not significant at 0.05 level, \*\*Significant at 0.01 level

The mean values of college environmental aspects (AS<sub>1</sub>) and academic related issues (AS<sub>2</sub>) indicate that the students' whose parents are govt. employee (43.88 & 64.79) are experiencing extreme stress compared to the parents with agriculture (41.47 & 60.13), parents engaged as labourers (40.39 & 59.50) and students of self employed parents (41.24 & 59.27). Further, for the home and college interface (AS<sub>3</sub>), the mean value is high for the students of labourer (37.05) followed by the students of parents with agriculture (35.66), self employed (33.24) and parents with govt. employment (32.44). The trend of the mean values indicates that the students of govt. employee are experiencing high academic stress than others due to AS<sub>2</sub> and AS<sub>3</sub>. This might be due to the govt. employee parents join their wards in private junior colleges and many times they impose their will on their children in securing grades and ranks in entrance tests. On other hand, the students whose parents occupation is agriculture experience more academic stress than their counterparts due to home and college interface (AS<sub>3</sub>). This may be due to the students whose parents are farmers have low level of education so that they can't guide their children in academics.

Whereas, the F-values with respect to the dimensions- physical health and personal aspects (AS<sub>1</sub>: 1.81), teacher- student- peer related aspect (AS<sub>3</sub>: 0.35), academic stress due to examinations (AS<sub>2</sub>: 2.62) and academic stress as a whole (ASW: 1.65) are not significant at 0.05 level, rejecting the stated hypothesis there exist significant differences in the academic stress of second year intermediate students due to variations in their parent occupation', with reference to the dimensions AS<sub>1</sub>, AS<sub>3</sub>, AS<sub>4</sub> and ASW.

#### IMPLICATIONS:

Meditation, prayer, yoga, sports and games should be the part and parcel of school/college activities to reduce academic stress. These activities not only support the physical and intellectual abilities of individuals but also strengthen the human mind towards the goals whether it is academic or otherwise. SC&ST students need to provide better facilities by govt. in the name of scholarships, special coaching centers, career guidance centers, hostels facilities and free education in corporate colleges. Students should be provided with better conducive col-

lege environments in the junior colleges, both private, government and aided colleges. Schools and colleges should organize varied activities to tap the potentialities of children and nurtured them according to their taste and will, than focusing for better grades in academics. Government employee should be oriented towards valuing their education goals of their children based on the innate potentiality of children and diversified talents should be nurtured. Guidance and counseling activities should be well integrated in the curriculum as well as in parent-teacher meetings. All junior colleges must a cell for guidance and counseling to address the physical health and personal aspects, college environment aspects, teacher-student- peer related aspects, academic related issues, home and college interface, academic stress due to examinations and academic stress as a whole.

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